

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5893

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

SECDEF

CINCPAC

S E C R E T KUALA LUMPUR 5489

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS MASS MY XC

SUBJECT: MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND REGIONAL SECURITY

REF: A. STATE 244895

B. KUALA LUMPUR 5442

C. JAKARTA 14582

D. MANILA 13736

SUMMARY: MALAYSIA IS ASEAN COUNTRY LEAST LIKELY TO LOOK WITH FAVOR ON FORMAL REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION BECAUSE OF NEUTRALIZATION OBJECTIVE AND DESIRE TO AVOID EMBROILMENT IN "BIG POWER POLITICS". IT MIGHT, HOWEVER, RESPOND TO SUGGESTIONS FROM ASEAN PARTNERS, PARTICULARLY INDONESIA, RE STANDARDIZATION OF WEAPONS AND OTHER MILITARY SYSTEM TO ENSURE COMPLEMENTARITY. END SUMMARY.

1. AS POINTED OUT IN PARA 7 REF B. GOM IS LEAST INTERESTED OF ASEAN FIVE IN MOVING THE ORGANIZATION TOWARD A MILITARY/SECURITY

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ROLE. GOM'S PRIMARY POLITICAL/FOREIGN POLICY INTEREST IN ASEAN IS

ITS SEA NEUTRALIZATION PROPOSAL WHICH TO VERY GREAT EXTENT WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED BY ASSUMPTION BY ASEAN OF REGIONAL DEFENSE ROLE. IN FACT, MALAYSIAN ACCEPTANCE OF INDONESIAN CONCEPTS OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL "RESILIENCE" REPRESENTS TREND IN OPPOSITE DIRECTION, I.E., PLACING PRIMARY EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL RATHER THAN REGIONAL DEFENSE NEEDS AND CONSIDERATIONS.

2. FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE, MALAYSIANS SEE THEIR NATIONAL DEFENSE INTERESTS ADEQUATELY ACCOUNTED FOR IN BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT AD HOC, BASED ON REQUIREMENTS TO COUNTER PENINSULAR MALAYSIAN AND SARAWAK INSURGENCIES. RECORD OF GOM INTEREST AND COOPERATION IN THESE RESPECTS IS WELL KNOWN. "GAP" IN MALAYSIAN THINKING, HOWEVER, SEEMS TO BE IN FIELD OF HARMONIZATION OF WEAPONRY; WE DOUBT FROM KNOWLEDGE OF GOM DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY PLANNING THAT MUCH, IF ANY, THOUGHT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO COMPLEMENTARITY OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS WITH NEIGHBORING NATIONS, WHICH MIGHT PERHAPS LEAD IN FAR DISTANT FUTURE TO CLOSER COORDINATION ON DEFENSE PLANNING, INTEGRATED AIR DEFENSE, AND RELATED MATTERS.

3. IF AND WHEN ASEAN FIVE BEGIN TO MOVE IN DIRECTION OF REGIONAL DEFENSE COOPERATION (THIS MAY NOT NECESSARILY OCCUR IN FORMAL ASEAN FRAMEWORK), WE SHOULD BE READY TO RESPOND TO AND QUIETLY ENCOURAGE ANY SUCH EFFORTS, BEARING IN MIND THAT OUR OVERT HAND WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO GOM CERTAINLY AND PROBABLY TO OTHER ASEAN PARTNERS IN VIEW OF NEUTRALIZATION OBJECTIVE AND DESIRE TO AVOID EMBROILMENT IN "BIG POWER POLITICS". IN THE INTERIM, WE SHOULD BEGIN TO ADDRESS QUESTION OF WEAPON AND LOGISTICAL SYSTEMS COMPLEMENTARITY BUT IN A QUIET AND CAREFUL FASHION ONLY TO ENCOURAGE AWARENESS OF THIS FACTOR IN CONNECTION WITH FUTURE MAP AID AND FMS SALES.

WIDMAN

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